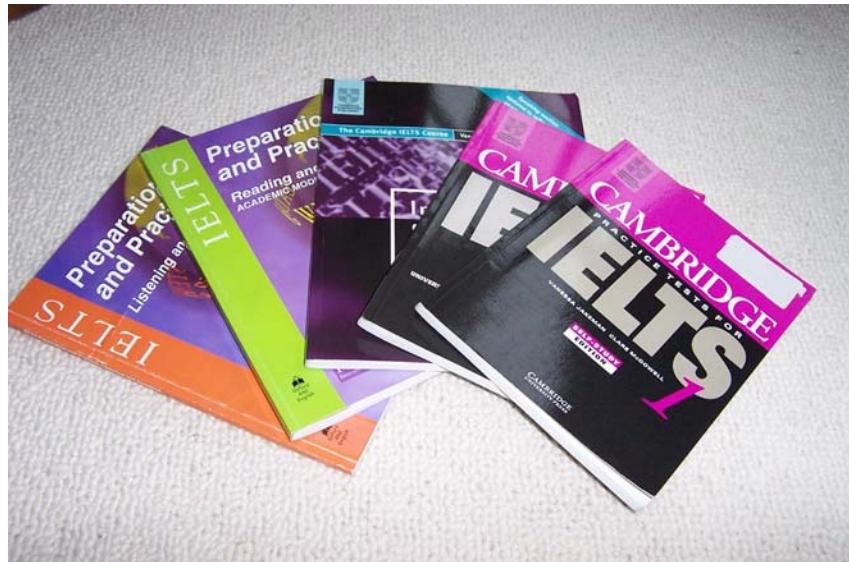




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How to prepare for IELTS Listening



How to prepare for IELTS – Listening

Contents

| | Page |
|---|------|
| Details of the listening test | 2 |
| The Question Types | |
| 1. Multiple choice | 4 |
| 2. Short answer questions | 6 |
| 3. Sentence completion questions | 8 |
| 4. Notes/ table/ form/ summary/ flow chart/diagram completion questions | 10 |
| 5. Labelling a diagram which has numbered parts | 13 |
| 6. Classification questions | 15 |
| General Tips for the listening test | 18 |

Make sure you have a copy of the **How to prepare for IELTS – FAQs booklet** in addition to this booklet.

How to prepare for IELTS – Listening

Details of the Listening Test

Procedure of the test

The listening module is the **first test** you do on the test day.

The tape is only **played once**.

You are given a question paper and an answer sheet. While you listen you write your answers on the **question paper**.

When the tape stops you are given **10 minutes** to **transfer** your answers to the **answer sheet**.

The test takes about **30 minutes**.

Structure of the test

The first **two sections** are concerned with **social needs**.

Section 1

In this section you will hear an informal or semi-informal **conversation between two people**. For example, you might hear a discussion about what's on television; or you might hear someone making a complaint about their rented flat or a faulty product, or someone asking for information or making a booking.

Section 2

In this section you will hear a **monologue** in a similar context to section 1. For example you could hear someone talking about the restaurants in a town or describing the rules or regulations in a hostel or the procedure you need to follow in order to make a complaint.

The **last two sections** are concerned with situations related to **educational or training contexts**.

Section 3

In this section you will hear a **conversation** with up to **four speakers**. It will be more formal than Section 1. The speakers could be students discussing a lecture or planning something for class or talking to someone in authority at a college or university.

Section 4

In this section you will hear a **monologue** in the form of a **lecture or talk**. It will also be more formal.

All the topics will be of general interest and not biased towards students of particular disciplines.

How to prepare for IELTS – Listening

Test instructions

At the **beginning** of **each section** the speaker will give a **brief introduction** to the situation. For example,

You are now going to listen to a conversation in a language school. Paulo is registering for a course and talking to a lady at the student services counter.

You will then be **given instructions**:

Read questions 1 to 6. As you listen to the tape, write the correct answer in the spaces provided.

You are then **told to look** at the **questions**:

First you have some time to look at the questions 1 to 6.

The tape will be **silent for about 30 seconds**. Then the speaker will repeat which questions you have to answer:

Now listen and answer questions 1 to 6.

Question types*

The types of tasks are:

1. Multiple Choice
2. Short-answer questions
3. Sentence completion
4. Notes/table/summary flow-chart/diagram completion
5. Labelling a diagram which has numbered parts
6. Classification

There are **40 questions** in total and about **10 questions in each section** and at least **two types of questions in each section**. Both the texts and the tasks **increase in difficulty** as the test progresses.

Marking

You are given a mark for each of the 40 questions and your result is converted into a score which corresponds to one of the bands from 1-9 which you will see on your result sheet. You can be awarded a whole or a half band in the listening section. (See *IELTS Handbook: p.20* or *Focus on IELTS: p.7* for details.)

How to prepare for IELTS – Listening

The Question Types

1. Multiple Choice

The questions

There are **three types** of multiple choice questions in the IELTS listening exam.

1. Where there is **one possible answer**. (These are sometimes picture multiple choice.)
2. Where there are **multiple answers for only one mark**.
3. Where there are **multiple answers and one mark for each**.

For these questions you may be given the **start of a sentence** which you have **to complete** with one out of four or more choices. **Or** you may be presented with a **question** and asked to **find two, three or four items** in a list of answers.

Look at the examples below.

Type 1

Questions 1 and 2

Circle the correct letters A-C.

- | | |
|----------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 1 When did John finish the book? | 2 What did John think about the book? |
| A on the way to Japan | A He thought it was funny. |
| B in Japan | B He couldn't understand it. |
| C on his way back from Japan. | C He didn't enjoy it. |

Type 2

Questions 3 and 4

Choose **TWO** letters A-E.

- | | |
|--------------------------------|--|
| 3 John likes to read novels... | 4 John would like the library... |
| A on his way to work.. | A to open on Sundays. |
| B during his lunch break.. | B to have more magazines and journals. |
| C on his way home from work. | C to employ more staff. |
| D after dinner. | D to have exhibitions. |
| E when he goes to bed. | E to do some renovations. |

How to prepare for IELTS – Listening

Type 3

Questions 5-7

Circle **THREE** letters A-F.

What types of books does John like to read?

- A Science fiction
- B Thrillers
- C Adventure
- D Romance
- E War
- F Biographies

Also note that you may be asked to circle **ONE, TWO, THREE or FOUR** letters.

How to do the multiple choice questions

- **Read** the **instructions carefully** and check how many letters you need to circle.
- **Skim** the **questions and the answer choices quickly** before the recording starts and during the 30 seconds given. As you do this,
 - ❖ **underline** the **key words** – the words that give you the most information, such as the 'wh-' words and nouns.
 - ❖ try to **work out what you are going to hear** from the vocabulary of the questions and/or pictures.
 - ❖ **translate** any **pictures** into words and look for details that are different in the options.
 - ❖ decide what **kind of information** you need **to listen out for**.
- **Listen** to the **introduction** given carefully.
- **Answer** the questions **as you listen**. Circle the letters. The information will be given in the same order as the questions, although it might be expressed differently. Be prepared **not** to hear the first or even second answer choices mentioned.
- Remember to **make notes** beside the question if you are not sure of the answer, so you can go back later.
- **Don't leave any questions unanswered.**

Remember

- ❑ to listen for people correcting themselves when speaking. They may discuss one of the answer choices and then reject it.
- ❑ to eliminate unlikely answers.

How to prepare for IELTS – Listening

Practice

Books in the SAC

Do as many of the following multiple choice questions as you can:

Insight into IELTS: p.15, pp.17-18, p.21, p.27

Focus on IELTS: p.19, p.65, pp.115-116, p.163, p.170, p.171

IELTS Preparation & Practice (Listening & Speaking): pp.3-4, pp.15-21

Cambridge IELTS: 1: pp.12-13, p.16, pp.18-19, p.36, p.38, pp.75-76

Cambridge IELTS: 2: pp.9-10, pp.54-56, pp.60-61, p.79, p.81

Cambridge IELTS: 3: p.10, p.12, p.34, p.59, p.79

Focusing on IELTS: pp.5-7

Helpful Hints for IELTS: pp.86-88, pp.91-92, pp.107-108

Websites

Holmesglen Institute of TAFE

<http://international.holmesglen.vic.edu.au/IELTS01.htm>

From homepage, go to listening & download the booklet.

See p.6 for multiple choice.

2. Short answer questions

The questions

These questions require general information or specific details which you will find by listening to the text.

There are **two types** of short answer questions in the IELTS listening exam.

Type 1. **Questions**

Type 2. **Lists**

These questions will always tell you to write your answers in **NO MORE THAN THREE WORDS**. So you can answer with one word, two words or three words but no more.

Also note that the **answers** should **not require a hyphenated word** (e.g. non-smoker) or a **contraction** (e.g. They've).

If the answer requires a **number**, you can write it as a **numeral** (e.g. 6) or a **word** (e.g. six) or a **combination** of a numeral and a word (e.g. 6 million).

How to prepare for IELTS – Listening

Look at the examples below.

Type 1

Questions 1 and 2

Write **NO MORE THAN THREE WORDS or A NUMBER** for each answer.

1 On which day of the week is the museum closed?

.....

2 How old is the museum?

.....

Type 2

Questions 3 - 5

List **THREE things which the museum has recently bought**.

Write **NO MORE THAN THREE WORDS** for each answer.

3

4

5

How to do short answer questions

- **Read the instructions carefully.**
- **Skim** the **questions quickly** before the recording starts and during the 30 seconds given. As you do this,
 - ❖ **underline the key words.**
 - ❖ try to **work out what you are going to hear.**
 - ❖ decide what you **need to listen out for.**
 - ❖ **look out for question words** like 'where' and 'who' which indicate you should listen for specific things like places and people.
- **Listen** to the **introduction** given **carefully**.
- **Answer** the questions **as you listen**. The answers will be given in the same order as the questions although they may be expressed differently.
- You may **use your own words**.
- **Make notes** beside the question if you are not sure of the answer.

How to prepare for IELTS – Listening

Remember

- ❑ if you don't know the meaning of any of the words in the questions look at the other questions. They might have some associated vocabulary in them to help you guess the meaning.
- ❑ the answer could be one word, two words or three words but not four or more.
- ❑ if you think you need more than three words your answer is probably incorrect.

Practice

Books in the SAC

Do as many of the following short answer questions as you can:

Focus on IELTS: p.36, p.66, p.114, p.169

IELTS Preparation & Practice (L&S): p.17, p.46, p.50

Cambridge IELTS 2: p.8, p.11, p.32, p.78

Cambridge IELTS 3: p.9, p.81

* Helpful Hints for IELTS: p.90, p.111

Websites

Holmesglen Institute of TAFE

<http://international.holmesglen.vic.edu.au/IELTS01.htm>

From homepage, go to listening & download booklet.

See p.9 for short answer questions.

* recommended

3. Sentence completion questions

The Questions

These questions require you to **complete the end of a sentence or insert a word or phrase** in the middle of a sentence or one sentence may require a word in the middle and a word at the end. The sentences **may be in a table**.

They are similar to the short answer questions in that they will always tell you to write your answers in **NO MORE THAN THREE WORDS**. So you can answer with one word, two words or three words but no more.

As with short answer questions:

How to prepare for IELTS – Listening

Also note that the answers **should not require a hyphenated word** (e.g. non-smoking) or a contraction (e.g. They've).

If the answer requires a **number**, you can write it as a **numeral** (e.g. 6) or a **word** (e.g. six) or a **combination** of a numeral and a word (e.g. 6 million).

Look at the example below.

Questions 1 - 3

Complete the sentences below.

Write NO MORE THAN THREE WORDS for each answer.

1 Both Hong Kong and Japan have

2 There are more visiting Japan.

3 Tourists are interested in
and

How to do sentence completion questions

- **Read** the **instructions carefully**.
- **Read** the **sentences carefully** before the recording starts and during the 30 seconds given. As you do this,
 - ❖ **underline the key words**.
 - ❖ try to **work out** what you are **going to hear**.
 - ❖ decide what you **need to listen out for**.
 - ❖ **anticipate grammatical form** as well as vocabulary.
 - ❖ if the sentences are part of a **table**, **check** whether they are **horizontal or vertical**.
- **Listen** to the **introduction** given carefully.
- **Answer** the **questions as you listen**. The information will be given in the same order as the questions, although it may be expressed differently. You may use your own words.
- Make sure your sentences are **grammatically correct**.
- **Make notes** beside the question if you are not sure of the answer.

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Remember

- ❑ the answer could be one word, two words or three words but not four or more.
- ❑ if you think you need more than three words your answer is probably incorrect.

Practice

Books in the SAC

Do the following sentence completion questions:

Focus on IELTS: p.66, p.98, p.171

Cambridge 2 p.36, p.76

* Hints p.110

Websites

Holmesglen Institute of TAFE

<http://international.holmesglen.vic.edu.au/IELTS01.htm>

From homepage, go to listening & download booklet.

See p.8 for sentence completion questions.

* recommended

4. Notes/table/form/summary/flow chart/diagram completion questions

The Questions

These questions ask for specific information.

There are **two types** of these completion questions in the IELTS exam.

Type 1. With a **selection of possible answers**.

Type 2. **Without a choice** of possible **answers**.

These questions require you to:

- insert a word or phrase in the middle of a sentence.
- insert a word in the middle and another word at the end of a sentence.
- write words or phrases that are not in sentences.
- write a letter that represents a word or phrase.

Type 2 questions are similar to the short answer questions in that they will tell you to write your answers in **NO MORE THAN THREE WORDS**. So you can answer with one word, two words or three words but no more.

How to prepare for IELTS – Listening

As with short answer questions also note that the answers **should not require a hyphenated word** (e.g. *non-smoker*) **or a contraction** (e.g. *They've*). If the answer requires a **number**, you can write it as a **numeral** (e.g. 6) or a **word** (e.g. *six*) or a **combination** (e.g. *6 million*).

Look at the examples below.

Type 1

Questions 1 -5

Complete the table below using the words from the box.
Write the appropriate letters A-G against Questions 1-5.

| Breed | Facts |
|------------------|-----------|
| Pug | (1) |
| Scottish Terrier | (2) |
| Shih Tzu | (3) |
| Great Dane | (4) |
| Greyhound | (5) |

- A watchdog in Chinese imperial courts
- B bred to chase foxes
- C status symbol
- D police dog
- E bred to guard sheep
- F appealed to Victorians
- G came from the Middle East

Type 2

Questions 6 -8

Complete the notes below.

Write **NO MORE THAN THREE WORDS or A NUMBER** for each answer.

SOUTH DOWNS DOG SHOW

Date: (6)

Time: (7) to

Place: (8)

How to prepare for IELTS – Listening

How to do these completion questions

- **Read** the **instructions** **carefully**.
- **Look** at the **table or form** etc **carefully** before the recording starts and during the 30 seconds given. As you do this,
 - ❖ **examine** any **headings or subheadings**.
 - ❖ try to **work out what you are going to hear**.
 - ❖ decide what you **need to listen out for**.
 - ❖ **anticipate grammatical form** as well as vocabulary.
 - ❖ if a box of answers is given, see if you can **guess any of the matches & eliminate unlikely answers**.
- **Listen** to the **introduction** given **carefully**.
- **Answer** the **questions as you listen**.
- **Make notes** beside the question if you are not sure of the answer.

Remember

- ❑ if there is a box of answers, there will be at least two you don't need.
- ❑ if there is no box, the answer could be one word, two words or three words but not four or more.
- ❑ if you think you need more than three words your answer is probably incorrect.
- ❑ there may be alternative rubrics for these completion questions e.g. 'complete the notice' or 'complete the explanation' or 'complete the news report'.

Practice

Books in the SAC

Do the following completion questions, examining the differences between them as you do them:

Focus on IELTS: p.66, p.98
notes: p.20, p.50, p.52, p.82, p.97, p.98, p.130, p.169, p.172
table: p.36, p.38, p.133, p.146, p.161, p.163, p.172
form: p.65, p.114
flow chart: p.146, p.163
diagram: p.170

Cambridge IELTS 2:

form: p.7, p. 31,
notes: p.9, p.36, p.58,
table: p.11, p.12, p.13, p.30, p.34, p.37, p.58

How to prepare for IELTS – Listening

Insight into IELTS:

table: p.11, p.27
form: p.12
notes: p.18, p.24, p.26

IELTS Preparation & Practice (L&S):

summary: p.16, p.25, p.44, p.50
table: p.17, p.46, p.48
table: p.22, p.42
form: p.37, p.41
notes: p.40, p.51

Helpful Hints for IELTS:

*summary: p.89, p.110
table: p.90

Websites

Holmesglen Institute of TAFE

<http://international.holmesglen.vic.edu.au/IELTS01.htm>

From homepage, go to listening & download booklet.

See p.5 for summary completion & p.7 for form completion.

* recommended

5. Labelling a diagram which has numbered parts

The questions

You will be given a diagram and asked to **label it with labels given** in the listening text. You will **usually** be **given** a **box of words** or phrases from which to select the labels.

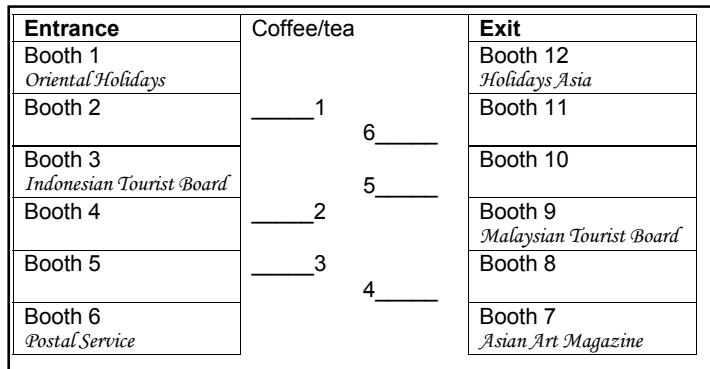
Look at the example on the next page.

How to prepare for IELTS – Listening

Questions 1 - 6

Label the booths at the exhibition.

Choose your answers from the box and write them next to questions 1-6.



Oriental vases
Korean cabinets
Indian rugs
Chinese furniture
Thai silk
Malaysian batik
Tibetan prayer rugs
Balinese woodwork
Oriental art

How to do labelling the diagram questions

- **Read** the **instructions carefully**. They will state how many words you should use if there is not a box of labels provided. You could be asked to write one word only.
- **Study** the **diagram**. You may be able to **predict** one or two **answers** or associated vocabulary that you may hear connected to a particular label.
- Check whether the **labels** are numbered in a **clockwise or anti-clockwise** direction. The information will be given in the same order as the numbers on the diagram.
- Write down or **select** the **labels as you listen**. Use the words you hear, not your own.

How to prepare for IELTS – Listening

- Remember to **listen carefully** when **words** are **spelt out**. Write them down even if you don't know where they go.
- Use the **information** given **on** the **diagram** to help you if you get lost.

Practice

Books in the SAC

Do the following labeling the diagram questions:

Cambridge IELTS 1: p.59

Cambridge IELTS 3: p.31, p.56

Insight into IELTS: p.24

Focus on IELTS: p.36, p.66, p.81*, p.82, p.149

6. Classification questions

The Questions

These questions ask you to **classify information** given in the listening text. Classifications are often according to the speaker's opinion or according to a period of time or place.

You will either be asked to **write a letter** which represents one of the classifications beside each item in a list of statements. Or you could be asked to **circle a letter in a table or tick a column in a table**.

Look at the examples on the next page.

How to prepare for IELTS – Listening

Questions 1-4

Write the appropriate letters A-C against questions 1-4.

Where are the following facilities?

- A in Portsmede
- B in Smalltown
- C in Farnton

Example

hairdressersC....

- 1 ice rink
- 2 cinema
- 3 French restaurant
- 4 clinic

OR

Questions 1-4

Choose the correct letters A-C.

| | In Portsmede A | In Smalltown B | In Farnton C |
|--------------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-----------------|
| Example <i>hairdressers</i> | A | B | C |
| 1 ice rink | A | B | C |
| 2 cinema | A | B | C |
| 3 French restaurant | A | B | C |
| 4 clinic | A | B | C |

How to prepare for IELTS – Listening

How to do these classification questions

- **Read the instructions carefully.**
- Make sure you know **how many classifications** there are and **what letters** you have **to use**.
- **Read the classifications carefully** and make sure you know which letter represents each one.
- **Read the statements/phrases or words** beside the question numbers and make yourself as familiar with them as possible. You will hear them all mentioned but they may be expressed differently in the text.
- **Underline the key words** in both the classifications and the question statements.
- **Listen out for the words** you have **underlined**.
- **Don't leave any** statements without a letter.

Practice

Books in the SAC

Do the following classification questions.

Focus on IELTS: p.149

Cambridge IELTS 2: p.35, p.57, p.59, p.82

Cambridge IELTS 3: p.13, p.79, p.82

IELTS Preparation & Practice (L&S): p.38

* Helpful Hints for IELTS: p.112

How to prepare for IELTS – Listening

General Tips for the listening test

Before the exam

- Make sure you are **familiar** with the **instructions** for the different **question types** so you can quickly glance at the questions and know what to do.
- **Think about** the type of **situations** you might come across living or studying **in an English speaking country**, such as someone asking for directions or talks on topics of general interest.
- **Listen** to as wide a range of material as possible – English language **television** and **radio**, listening sites on the **Internet** and **films** and **music** are all great sources.
- **Do** as many **practice tests** as you can to get used to the speed of delivery and the task types.
- **Focus** on the **strategies and skills** you need for listening (see *Focusing on IELTS pp.8-37*). For example:
 - ❖ ‘listening for specific information’ (p.8-12);
 - ❖ ‘guessing meaning of words’, (p.23)
 - ❖ ‘recognising signposts’ (p.26)
 - ❖ ‘understanding lectures & talks’ (p.111-113).

Practise these strategies and skills with as much listening material as you can.

During the exam

Before listening

- Make sure you use the 30 seconds given at the beginning of each section to **read the questions** before listening.
- Make sure you **look at all the questions** in each section.
- Make sure you **read the instructions** carefully.
- Make sure you know **what form your answer** should take e.g. a word, a letter, a tick, a phrase, a circle around the correct letter etc
- Make sure you use the time given to **analyse the questions**.
- Decide **what you are listening for**. Are you listening for specific information, for the main idea or for the speaker’s attitude?
- Use the outline given of the topic, who is talking and the situation to **predict** possible answers.
- When you look at the questions, think about **synonyms**. You may not hear the exact words that are in the answer choices.

How to prepare for IELTS – Listening

While listening

- Listen **carefully** to the **instructions**.
- Listen out for **key words** and common **signpost words** like – ‘on the other hand’, ‘in contrast’ etc
- Remember the **questions** usually follow the same **sequence** as the **conversation or talk** but the information may be expressed differently from the questions.
- **Write down something** even if you haven’t got the answer before moving on to the next question.
- Make sure you **continue to listen while** you are **writing** as you only hear the tape once.
- **Don’t get stuck** on a question you can’t answer. Just move on.
- Remember there may be **sections of irrelevant information**. Just keep listening for the information you need.
- **Write notes** in the question booklet as you listen. This may help you go back to a difficult question later.

After listening

- Make sure you **transfer your answers correctly**.
- Make sure you use the time given to **check your answers**.
- If you **can’t remember** an answer, **guess**.